

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

while he played with most sweet melody, the Virgin Mother of God took the right hand of Catherine with her most sacred hand, and, holding out her fingers towards the Son, besought Him to deign to espouse her to Himself in Faith. To which graciously consenting, the Only Begotten of God drew out a ring of gold, which had in its circle four pearls enclosing a most beauteous diamond; and, placing this ring upon the ring-finger of Catherine's right hand, He said : ' Lo, I espouse thee to Myself, thy Creator and Saviour, in the Faith, which, until thou celebratest thy eternal nuptials with Me in Heaven, thou wilt preserve ever without stain. Henceforth, My daughter, do manfully and without hesitation those things which, by the ordering of My providence, will be put into thy hands ; for, being now armed with the fortitude of the Faith, thou wilt happily overcome all thy adversaries.' Then the vision disappeared, but that ring ever remained on her finger, not indeed to the sight of others, but only to the sight of the virgin herself; for she often, albeit with bash-fulness, confessed to me that she always saw that ring on her finger, nor was there any time when she did not see it."¹

¹ *Legenda*, I. xii. I, 2 (§ 115).